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ACTION DRL-02

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R 231437Z MAY 00
FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5160
INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY LAGOS
AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 BOGOTA 004360

DEPT FOR DRL - DAS FREEMAN, EB - MCMANUS
ALSO FOR DS - BERGIN, PROCTOR, PRM - DAS HOUZE

E.O. 12958: DECL: 5/23/10
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SUBJECT: DRL DAS FREEMAN PRESENTS CORPORATE
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RESPONSIBILITY INITIATIVE IN COLOMBIA

REFS: A) 99 BOGOTA 6037 B) BOGOTA 4217

CLASSIFIED BY AMBASSADOR CURTIS W. KAMMAN, REASON 1.5(D).

SUMMARY

1. (U) DRL DAS FREEMAN VISITED BOGOTA MAY 14-15
FOLLOWING THE VISIT OF U/S PICKERING AND DELEGATION TO
CARTAGENA (SEPTTEL). FREEMAN INTRODUCED THE DEPARTMENT'S
CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITY INITIATIVE AND FURTHER REFINED
THE INITIATIVE BASED ON FEEDBACK RECEIVED FROM EMBOFFS

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AND COLOMBIAN INTERLOCUTORS. THE INITIATIVE WAS WELL RECEIVED BY MULTI-NATIONAL OIL COMPANY EXECUTIVES, NGO'S, ELEMENTS OF THE GOC, LABOR UNIONISTS, AND THE AMERICAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE. ADDITIONALLY, FREEMAN USED REMAINING TIME TO DISCUSS: NGOS' CONCERNS ABOUT MILITARY ASSISTANCE ELEMENTS OF PLAN COLOMBIA; THE POSSIBILITY OF GOC-LED DIALOGUE WITH OCCIDENTAL PETROLEUM AND THE U'WA TRIBE; THE NEED FOR A GOVERNMENT-FARC IHL AGREEMENT; AND LABOR UNIONISTS' PERSPECTIVES ON ILO DEVELOPMENTS. END SUMMARY.

CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITY

2. (U) IN A MAY 15 MEETING WITH REPRESENTATIVES FROM BRITISH PETROLEUM/AMOCO ("BP") AND OCCIDENTAL PETROLEUM ("OXY"), DAS BENNETT FREEMAN OUTLINED THE CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITY INITIATIVE THAT DRL HAS BEEN DEVELOPING WITH REGIONAL AND OTHER FUNCTIONAL BUREAUS. FREEMAN

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NOTED THAT THE DEPARTMENT WAS IN THE PROCESS OF TAILORING THE INITIATIVE TO COLOMBIA'S UNIQUE CIRCUMSTANCES. DAS FREEMAN TOOK SPECIAL CARE TO AVOID CASTING COLOMBIA IN THE SAME LIGHT AS NIGERIA AND INDONESIA, A POINT APPRECIATED BY THE OIL EXECUTIVES. HE OBSERVED THAT SECURITY CONCERNS WOULD LIMIT THE EMBASSY'S AND OIL EXECUTIVES' ABILITY TO IMPLEMENT THE INITIATIVE IN THE COUNTRYSIDE. DAS FREEMAN MADE CLEAR THE USG'S DUAL AND COMPLEMENTARY INTERESTS IN HAVING U.S. COMPANIES PROFIT AND MAINTAIN GOOD CORPORATE CITIZENSHIP ABROAD.

3. (U) DAS FREEMAN PROPOSED AN EMBASSY-HOSTED MEETING BETWEEN U.S. ENERGY EXECUTIVES AND RELEVANT GOC OFFICIALS TO DISCUSS THE CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITY INITIATIVE, ONCE IT IS FINALLY APPROVED BY THE DEPARTMENT. ADDITIONALLY, HE PROPOSED A ONE-DAY CONFERENCE IN WHICH ENERGY EXECUTIVES, NGO'S, AND COLOMBIAN GOVERNMENT AND USG OFFICIALS WOULD CONVENE TO DISCUSS AND PROMOTE CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITY.

4. (SBU) BP AND OXY REPRESENTATIVES RESPONDED POSITIVELY TO DAS FREEMAN'S COMMENTS AND PROPOSALS. THEY REMARKED THAT WHATEVER ROLE THE EMBASSY COULD PLAY TO ENHANCE THE DIALOGUE AMONG STAKEHOLDERS WOULD BE BENEFICIAL AND PLEDGED THEIR FULL COOPERATION IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE INITIATIVE. (NOTE: THE BP REPRESENTATIVE PRIVATELY REINFORCED TO ECONOFF HIS COMMITMENT TO THE INITIATIVE BUT EMPHASIZED THE IMPORTANCE OF AVOIDING A SITUATION IN

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WHICH THE GOC AND COLOMBIAN ARMED FORCES WERE
"EMBARRASSED OR FELT CORNERED" ON THE SECURITY
ARRANGEMENTS ISSUE. END NOTE.)

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5. (SBU) DAS FREEMAN'S INITIATIVE WAS ALSO WELCOMED BY JOSEPH FINNIN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE AMERICAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE. FINNIN SUPPORTED DAS FREEMAN'S ASSERTION THAT A CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITY INITIATIVE WOULD BENEFIT COLOMBIA'S BUSINESS AND INVESTMENT ENVIRONMENT, ULTIMATELY PROVING PROFITABLE FOR U.S. MULTINATIONALS. FINNIN ALSO OFFERED HIS FULL COOPERATION IN DEVELOPING A FORUM THAT WOULD BRING TOGETHER BUSINESS LEADERS, NGO'S, AND GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS TO CONSULT ON WAYS TO PROMOTE CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITY.

6. (U) SEPARATELY, ADVISER TO THE ENERGY MINISTER MARIA CONSUELO RAMIREZ AND MIGUEL ANGEL SANTIAGO, ADVISER TO THE STATE OIL COMPANY PRESIDENT, PROVIDED ADDITIONAL SUPPORT FOR THE CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITY INITIATIVE. RAMIREZ OFFERED THE FULL COOPERATION OF THE ENERGY MINISTRY, AND SANTIAGO INDICATED HIS WILLINGNESS TO WORK WITH THE EMBASSY IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAM IN COLOMBIA.

7. (U) FREEMAN MET WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF THE MAGDALENA MEDIO PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT CONSORTIUM, A WORLD BANK- AND USAID-SPONSORED NGO DEDICATED TO PEACEFUL CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND ALTERNATIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN THE MAGDALENA MEDIO REGION. THE REPRESENTATIVES TOLD FREEMAN ABOUT THEIR GRASSROOTS MODEL OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT, WHICH HE ASSERTED COULD COMPLEMENT THE CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITY INITIATIVE. ACCORDING TO MAURICIO KATZ

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R 231437Z MAY 00
 FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
 TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5161
 INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 03 BOGOTA 004360

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 RESPONSIBILITY INITIATIVE IN COLOMBIA

GARCIA, DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF THE NGO, BP AND OXY HAVE
 ALREADY EXPRESSED AN INTEREST IN COOPERATING WITH THE
 CONSORTIUM.

SENATOR: DIALOGUE NEEDED IN U'WA-OXY CONFRONTATION

8. (C) [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] DISCUSSED WITH FREEMAN AND PICA THE
 CURRENT U'WA TRIBE-OXY CONFRONTATION OVER THE U.S. OIL
 COMPANY'S PLANS TO DRILL IN THE SAMORE BLOCK IN ARAUCA
 DEPARTMENT (REF B). FREEMAN SAID THE USG WAS KEENLY
 INTERESTED IN A PACIFIC SOLUTION WHICH WOULD PERMIT OXY'S
 EXPLORATION TO PROCEED WHILE ENSURING PROTECTION OF THE
 U'WA'S RIGHTS AND CULTURE. CITING FOUR OCCASIONS ON
 WHICH COLOMBIAN GOVERNMENTS HAD FAILED TO COMPLY WITH THE
 TERMS OF AGREEMENTS REACHED WITH INDIGENOUS PEOPLE DURING
 THE 1990'S, [REDACTED] SAID THE PASTRANA GOVERNMENT HAD NO
 CREDIBILITY WITH THE U'WA OR ANY OTHER INDIGENOUS GROUP.
 PATIENT, RESPECTFUL DIALOGUE MIGHT LEAD TO AN EVENTUAL
 SOLUTION, [REDACTED] SAID, BUT THE GOVERNMENT WAS UNWILLING:

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ITS MOST RECENT ATTEMPT AT TALKING WITH THE U'WA HAD QUICKLY DETERIORATED INTO AN EXCHANGE OF INSULTS. IN RESPONSE, THE U'WA HAD ADOPTED EVER MORE RADICAL POSITIONS. ALTHOUGH [REDACTED] DID NOT BELIEVE THE U'WA WERE CLOSE TO CARRYING OUT THEIR THREAT OF MASS SUICIDE, HE SAID STEPS SHOULD BE TAKEN TO ENSURE THAT THAT DOES NOT HAPPEN. ASKED IF THE USG COULD HELP, [REDACTED] TOLD FREEMAN THAT USG BEHIND THE SCENES ENCOURAGEMENT COULD BRING ABOUT MEANINGFUL DIALOGUE. HE SUGGESTED THAT SUCH

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A DIALOGUE SHOULD INCLUDE THE GOC, THE U'WA, AND A THIRD-PARTY FACILITATOR WHO WAS MUTUALLY AGREEABLE TO THE GOC AND THE U'WA.

HUMAN RIGHTS NGO'S: MAKE PEACE, NOT WAR

9. (SBU) DAS FREEMAN, DRL SPECIAL ADVISER PICA, AND HUMAN RIGHTS OFFICER MET WITH [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] SAID THEY SUPPORTED PLAN COLOMBIA, BUT FAVORED MORE SPENDING ON ALTERNATIVE DEVELOPMENT AND HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE, AND LESS ON MILITARY HARDWARE. THEY TOLD FREEMAN PLAN COLOMBIA "SHOULD BE A PLAN FOR PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT, NOT WAR." BOTH SAID SOME HUMAN RIGHTS NGO'S MIGHT BE UNWILLING TO ACCEPT USAID ASSISTANCE WHICH WAS PART OF THE SAME OVERALL PACKAGE AS MILITARY ELEMENTS OF PLAN COLOMBIA. ANOTHER FUNDING MECHANISM SHOULD BE FOUND.

10. (C) [REDACTED] SAID HE RECENTLY MET IN WASHINGTON WITH PRM A/S TAFT, AND DISCUSSED WITH A/S TAFT THE POSSIBILITY OF FORMING A MIXED COLOMBIAN-U.S. NGO OBSERVER TEAM TO MONITOR CONDITIONS IN PUTUMAYO AS THE COUNTER-NARCOTICS ADVANCE INTO PUTUMAYO BEGINS. FREEMAN STRONGLY SUPPORTED THE IDEA. [REDACTED] SAID HE HAD HEARD RUMORS THAT THE GOC AND FARC WERE PRIVATELY DISCUSSING AN INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW (IHL) ACCORD WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF THE ONGOING PEACE NEGOTIATIONS. DAS FREEMAN AND HUMAN RIGHTS

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OFFICER SUGGESTED THAT EUROPEAN GOVERNMENTS WERE WELL POSITIONED TO ENCOURAGE SUCH AN AGREEMENT. THOSE WITH ONGOING CONTACTS WITH THE FARC SHOULD MAKE IMPROVED

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RESPECT FOR IHL A CONDITION OF THEIR CONTACTS.

LABOR LEADERS: GOC INCORRIGIBLE

 11. (SBU) "CUT" AND "CGTD" LABOR UNION LEADERS TOLD FREEMAN THEY LAMENTED HAVING TO CALL FOR AN ILO COMMISSION OF INQUIRY IN 1996, BUT SAID ONE IS STILL WARRANTED. THEY ACCUSED THE GOC OF FAILING TO PROTECT THE LIVES OF ORGANIZED WORKERS, SOME 3,000 OF WHOM HAD BEEN MURDERED DURING THE PAST 13 YEARS, AND OF SYSTEMATICALLY VIOLATING BASIC LABOR RIGHTS. THEY FORECAST THAT THE ILO DIRECT CONTACT MISSION PRELIMINARY REPORT, TO BE ISSUED AT THE END OF MAY, WOULD BE HIGHLY CRITICAL OF THE GOC, AND WOULD ULTIMATELY RESULT IN AN ILO COMMISSION OF INQUIRY BEING DISPATCHED TO COLOMBIA. THE LABOR LEADERS BEMOANED THE "OLIGARCHY'S CONTINUING MISMANAGEMENT OF THE ECONOMY," WHICH HAD RESULTED IN THE WORST RECESSION IN 50 YEARS. ALL HAD STRONG RESERVATIONS ABOUT THE MILITARY COMPONENT OF PLAN COLOMBIA, BUT LAUDED THE USG'S INTENTIONS TO SHORE UP THE CIVILIAN JUDICIARY AND CIVIL SOCIETY AND PROVIDE ALTERNATIVE DEVELOPMENT FUNDS. FINALLY, FREEMAN INTRODUCED THE CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITY INITIATIVE, WHICH THE LABOR LEADERS RECEIVED WARMLY.

12. (U) DRL DAS FREEMAN CLEARED THIS MESSAGE PRIOR TO

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FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
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AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 03 OF 03 BOGOTA 004360

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RESPONSIBILITY INITIATIVE IN COLOMBIA

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